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Identical letters dated 28 April 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the twenty-sixth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) (S/2016/384).

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms the positions that it has previously communicated in its identical letters addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council responding to the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015). It would also like to stress the following points:

1. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic continues to note the attempts by the authors of the report to lend a veneer of objectivity to their treatment of certain aspects of the humanitarian situation in Syria. However, they still fail to reflect the full extent of the progress made in cooperation with the Syrian Government in delivering assistance to affected beneficiaries in both stable and unstable parts of Syria. The Government regrets that the Secretariat has tried to minimize successes achieved during March and to hold the Syrian Government responsible for any shortfalls. We note that the United Nations only initiated operations to deliver assistance to unstable areas approved under the April plan approximately halfway through that month. The Syrian Government is not responsible for that delay. The Syrian Government urges the United Nations to press States that support such armed terrorist groups as Army of Conquest, the Nusrah Front and Ahrar al-Sham to allow assistance to be delivered to several areas, including Kafraya, Fu'ah and Dayr al-Zawr, and to grant the Government access to assess the horrendous conditions in those areas. The Syrian Government also condemns the selective focus by Secretariat officials on unstable areas, which only lays bare their continued politicization of humanitarian work and belies the claims of some that their goal is to deliver humanitarian assistance to all parts of Syria.

2. The Syrian Government also deplores the Secretariat's obdurate inaccuracy with regard to the number of requests submitted to the Syrian Government. It claims that there are 72 such requests. However, since February 2016, official communications from the Office of the United Nations Resident

Coordinator addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have focused on priority areas identified following the formation of the Task Force on Humanitarian Access in Geneva in February 2016. Those are the requests to which the Syrian Government has responded; the United Nations has not repeated any mention of most of the areas cited in its request for the month of January 2016 in subsequent notes verbales. Therefore, the claim in paragraph 27 that there are 30 unanswered requests is unreasonable. Moreover, even with respect to those 30 requests, the Syrian Government is struck by the inaccuracy of the United Nations. Although two of the requests, for the Sabburah and Marbnafsah areas in Hama governorate, have been approved, that fact is not noted in the above-mentioned paragraph. The Syrian Government urges the authors of the report to be more accurate when transmitting information or conveying updates to Member States, in particular Security Council members, on requests submitted. They must also avoid inflating the numbers of requests and other figures to serve the agenda of certain parties who would malign the Syrian Government.

3. The Syrian Government is surprised that the report fails to mention that the Government had approved the delivery of medical supplies, with the exception of surgical implements and atropine, to all parts of Syria. The Syrian Government urges the United Nations to inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of any difficulties encountered by delivery operations, so that they can be addressed.

4. The Syrian Government also finds strange the bias demonstrated by the authors of the current report for the Turkish Government at the expense of affected civilians in Hasakah governorate. It is not the case that the Nusaybin border crossing has been closed temporarily since December 2015, as reported in paragraph 30. In reality, the Turkish Government has failed to approve United Nations requests to bring humanitarian aid into Hasakah governorate for political reasons. It is strange that the authors of the report should meekly accept the Turkish Government's claim about humanitarian assistance failing to reach Hasakah governorate because of the temporary closure of the Nusaybin crossing for security reasons when the Turkish Government allows the Bab al-Hawa and Bab al-Salamah crossings to be used, although everyone, including United Nations humanitarian workers, is aware that terrorist groups are deployed on both sides of those two crossings. This means that, in practice, the Turkish Government is quite happy to deliver humanitarian assistance to armed groups.

The United Nations, the members of the Security Council, and everyone else involved in humanitarian work should press the Turkish Government to permit assistance to pass through the Nusaybin crossing into Hasakah governorate immediately.

5. The Syrian Government deplores the authors' deliberate and exclusive focus in their monthly reports on the terrorist Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) organization, while they turn a blind eye to terrorism perpetrated by the Nusrah Front and other terrorist groups allied with it or linked to Al-Qaida in the areas where those groups have a presence. Anyone reading the current report would conclude that ISIL is the only terrorist organization in Syria. In that regard, the Syrian Government strongly rejects the blatant and repeated whitewashing by the Secretariat and the Office of the Resident Coordinator in Damascus of the terrorist Nusrah Front organization and the other armed terrorist groups connected with it and with Al-Qaida, such as Ahrar al-Sham, the Levant Front, the Army of Islam, the

Army of Conquest, the Free Army and other groups that take pride in their takfirist Wahhabi affiliations and their connections with the Nusrah Front, ISIL and Al-Qaida.

6. The Syrian Government reiterates that it continues to reject the use by Secretariat officials of the term "non-State armed groups" to describe such terrorist organizations as ISIL, the Nusrah Front, Al-Qaida and groups linked to or cooperating with them that receive foreign support and funding from several Governments, notably those of Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. That constitutes a flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions concerning counter-terrorism and the Charter of the United Nations. We have every right to once again put to the Secretariat our question about the legal basis on which it relies in using such terminology. We note that, to date, the Secretariat has not taken the trouble to answer that question, which only confirms the validity of the Syrian Government's position on this matter.

7. The Syrian Government reiterates that it is unacceptable for the Secretariat to base its reports on the unreliable sources from which it and other United Nations entities, such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, take their information on the situation in Syria. The Government also reiterates its condemnation of the equivalence drawn by the Secretariat between counter-terrorism activities and terrorist acts; this is a clear indication that the Secretariat shares the bias of those sources of information, whose aim is to tarnish the image of the Syrian Government and its allies and undermine their counter-terrorism efforts.

8. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its long-standing position that the crisis in Syria requires a political solution based on dialogue among Syrians under Syrian leadership and without preconditions. It further stresses that the political approach goes hand in hand with counter-terrorism efforts, which will continue until all of the armed terrorist groups active in Syria have been eradicated. In that connection, the Syrian Government reminds the Secretariat that the Geneva meetings are meant to lead to a political solution, not some other result. It furthermore reminds the Secretariat that the success of those meetings and any significant improvement in the humanitarian situation will depend, above all, on creating a climate conducive to a serious and non-politicized international and regional commitment to fighting terrorism and on an immediate end to the unilateral coercive economic measures being imposed on the Syrian people with no legal or moral basis.

9. The Syrian Government finds it deplorable that, yet again, in its twenty-sixth consecutive report, the Secretariat fails to provide any genuinely objective monitoring or reporting of the effects of the unilateral coercive economic measures, which have been imposed against Syria for more than five years, on the humanitarian and living conditions of Syrian civilians in all areas without exception. In so doing, the Secretariat is disregarding information contained in reports from certain United Nations agencies, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, and even statements of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Syria.

10. The Syrian Government cannot accept the claims that the delivery of medical assistance is being hindered. It is astonished by the persistent and inexplicable failure of Secretariat officials to provide updated information on

medical assistance. Since the beginning of 2016, the Syrian Government has approved 10 World Health Organization (WHO) requests to deliver medical assistance to the following governorates and regions: Duma in Rif Dimashq; Raqqah governorate; Ayn Arab, Shaddadah and Ras al-Ayn in Hasakah governorate; Yabrud, Assal al-Ward, Bayt Sawa, Kafr Batna, Arbin, Zamalka, Zabdin and Mulayhah in Rif Dimashq; Idlib governorate; Jindayris, Raju, Shiran, Sirrin and Dayr Hafir in Aleppo governorate; Rastan, Talbisah, Qaryatayn, Tadmur (Palmyra) and Tall Daww in Homs Governorate; Qal'at al-Madiq, Ziyarah, Kafr Zayta, Murak, Suran and Si'in in Hama governorate; and Ayn Isa and Suluk in Raqqah governorate. It should be pointed out that the Syrian Government recently approved several requests from WHO to deliver medical assistance, including vaccinations for H1N1 influenza to Duma in Rif Dimashq and to Raqqah, and to provide dialysis sessions in Duma in Rif Dimashq. Paragraphs 20, 26 and 45 of the report note that WHO was able to deliver medical assistance to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries, including in unstable areas.

11. The Syrian Government reiterates its rejection of the Secretariat's attempts to equivocate regarding the so-called besieged areas, notably by inflating or downplaying the numbers of inhabitants in those areas in order to serve the goals of certain parties in the Organization. In its previous responses to the reports of the Secretary-General, starting in August 2015, the Syrian Government has repeatedly tried to correct the Secretariat's errors. For example, the number of people besieged in Dayr al-Zawr was 300,000 rather than 200,000 as claimed by Secretariat officials in their current report, while the number of persons besieged in Fu'ah and Kafraya was 35,000, not 12,500. The Syrian Government notes that Duma and Darayya are hubs for such armed terrorist groups as ISIL and the Army of Islam.

12. The Syrian Government reiterates its position that cross-border assistance is futile, and condemns once more the Secretariat's insistence on covering up the lack of transparency on the part of the United Nations with regard to such assistance. The notifications being sent to the Syrian Government still contain inaccurate figures, information, numbers of beneficiaries and particulars on which parties collect aid to distribute it to civilian recipients. The Syrian Government also reiterates that the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism is unable to confirm the delivery of cross-border assistance to beneficiaries. What is certain is that cross-border assistance is finding its way into the hands of the armed terrorists, or they are appropriating it, distributing some of it to their members and selling the rest to civilians at exorbitant prices on the black market. The members of the Security Council must be aware that the Turkish regime's intelligence apparatus is continuing to use the Bab al-Hawa and Bab al-Salamah crossings to smuggle weapons and deliver them to armed terrorist groups active in Syria on the pretext of delivering cross-border assistance to Syria.

13. The Syrian Government stresses that the Secretariat should update its information on the number of foreign non-governmental organizations operating in Syria. There are now 20 registered non-governmental organizations authorized to operate in Syria, as opposed to 16 as stated in paragraph 32.

14. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic once again calls on the Security Council to compel those States that support and finance armed terrorist groups to desist from providing any form of support and funding to those groups, in implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on countering terrorism

and the financing of terrorism, particularly resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015).

15. I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mounzer **Mounzer**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex I to the identical letters dated 28 April 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Crimes committed by ISIL, the Nusrah Front, the Free Army, the Army of Islam, the Army of Conquest and other armed terrorist groups ignored by the authors of the report

- In the period 21 February to 21 March 2016, terrorists killed 285 civilians, including 54 children, and injured 625 civilians, including 163 children, across the governorates of Syria, not including Raqqah and Idlib.
- In the period 21 January to 21 February 2016, terrorists killed 11 civilians, including 5 children, and injured 24 civilians, including 7 children, in Dayr al-Zawr governorate.
- On 4 and 5 March, armed terrorist groups belonging to the ISIL organization fired mortar shells at the Qusur and Muwazzafin neighbourhoods of the city of Dayr al-Zawr, killing two civilians and injuring five others. Material damage was caused.
- On 6 and 7 March, an explosive device was detonated on the Aleppo-Khanasir highway while a private car was passing, killing four civilians and injuring three others.
- On 7 and 8 March, in the city of Aleppo, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, the Islamic Front, Liwa' al-Tawhid, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Emigrants Brigade and Northern Shield fired mortar shells and locally made missiles at the Shaykh Maqsud and Jam'iyat al-Zahra' neighbourhoods, killing seven civilians and causing material damage. On 18 April 2016, a gas cylinder missile ("hell cannon") fired at the Jam'iyat al-Zahra' area killed two children. On 19 April 2016, mortar shells fired at the Midan neighbourhood killed a woman and injured two civilians.
- On 7, 8 and 9 March, armed terrorist groups belonging to the ISIL organization fired mortar shells at the Qusur neighbourhood of Dayr al-Zawr city, killing 11 civilians and injuring 14 others. Material damage was caused.
- On 10 and 11 March, armed terrorist groups belonging to the Nusrah Front and the Rahman Corps in Duma gardens fired mortar shells at the Assad suburb in Harasta, injuring eight children with shrapnel and causing material damage.
- On 12 and 13 March, armed terrorist groups belonging to the Nusrah Front, Ahrar al-Sham and the Army of Conquest in Hirsh al-Qusaybah, located north of the village of Nabudah, fired shells at the town of Suqaylibiyah in Hama, injuring two civilians with shrapnel and causing material damage.
- On 13 and 14 March, armed terrorist groups belonging to the ISIL organization fired mortar shells at the Qusur neighbourhood of Dayr al-Zawr city, killing a woman and injuring two civilians. Material damage was caused.

- On 14 and 15 March, armed terrorist groups belonging to the ISIL organization in the village of Unq al-Hawa fired mortar shells at the town of Jubb al-Jarrah in Homs, killing two women.

- On 20 and 21 March, armed terrorist groups belonging to the ISIL organization fired mortar shells at the Harabish neighbourhood of the city of Dayr al-Zawr, killing a female child and injuring five civilians, including children. On 26 and 27 April 2016, a woman was killed and 10 civilians were injured.

- On 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 March, in the city of Aleppo, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, the Islamic Front, Liwa' al-Tawhid, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Emigrants Brigade and Northern Shield located in the Rashidin, Bustan al-Qasr, Mansurah, Salah al-Din, Bani Zayd and Amiriyah neighbourhoods fired mortar shells and gas cylinder missiles at the Bustan al-Zahra', Hamdaniyah, Idha'ah, Halab al-Jadidah and Mushariqah neighbourhoods, killing two civilians and injuring 21 others. Material damage was caused.

- On 26 and 27 March, a female terrorist blew herself up with an explosive vest in Kana'is Street in the city of Ra's al-Ayn in Hasakah, killing and injuring civilians.

- On 30 and 31 March, an explosive device was detonated in the town of Buqayn, which is attached to Madaya in Rif Dimashq, killing two children and injuring another with shrapnel.

Annex II to the identical letters dated 28 April 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Examples of humanitarian assistance that was delivered during March 2016 thanks to the facilitation provided by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations and other international organizations, in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. Also listed is assistance delivered by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent

- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid (food and non-food aid and medical assistance), provided from inside Syrian territory by United Nations organizations, to various governorates, including Rif Dimashq, Aleppo, Qunaytirah, Hasakah, Homs, Hama and Dar'a, but not to Raqqah or Dayr al-Zawr governorates. Some 1,908,235 Syrian beneficiaries (381,647 families) received food parcels provided by the World Food Programme through the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. The above-mentioned assistance was distributed by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to the governorates as follows: 51,298 parcels in Rif Dimashq; 18,815 parcels in Dar'a and its countryside; 52,000 parcels in Aleppo and its countryside; 2,320 parcels in Hasakah; 45,009 parcels in Hama and its countryside; and 75,059 parcels in Homs and its countryside.

- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross from inside Syrian territory to most governorates, including Rif Dimashq, Qunaytirah, Dar'a, Aleppo, Hama and Homs. A total of 77,418 food parcels were delivered, in addition to 16,066 canned food parcels and food aid for community kitchens. A total of 902 food parcels provided by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies were distributed in Homs, Dayr al-Zawr and Damascus governorates.

- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid (food and non-food aid, medical assistance, water purifiers, wheelchairs and baby food) provided by United Nations organizations and five foreign non-governmental organizations operating in Syria to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries in Aleppo, Hasakah, Rif Dimashq, Dar'a, Qunaytirah, Damascus, Homs, Hama, Suwayda', Tartus and Ladhiqiyah governorates.

- From 2014 through March 2016, a total of 129,782 food parcels and 35,380 medical parcels had been delivered to the inhabitants of the camp by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. That is in addition to the ongoing operation to provide non-food aid, other foodstuffs and medical care. We also note that the Palestine refugees in Yalda, Babila and Bayt Saham are inhabitants of Yarmouk camp who were displaced from the camp after the terrorist organization ISIL overran it in April 2015 in collusion with the terrorist Nusrah Front and other terrorist groups present inside the camp.